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New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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USDA MEASURES FRUIT & VEGETABLE CROPS

Drought conditions in 2002 have severely stressed vegetable and fruit crops across New England. Water supplies are growing tight as growers struggle to move irrigation equipment to supply needed moisture to parched fields. Apple producers contacted in early August expected production to fall 16 percent below 2001 output. Farmers are hopeful that government farm programs will be in place to help with expected losses this year.

At the request of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and funded by the State Departments of Agriculture in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, the New England Agricultural Statistics Service, a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is poised to begin a five year study of fruit and vegetable prices and yields. State FSA offices will use the data to administer farm programs based on individual state yield and price data, which will more adequately reflect farming practices and commodity prices received in New England. This new data series will also be extremely valuable for growers to use in making production and marketing decisions; for Cooperative Extension to provide needed outreach and education; and the State Departments of Agriculture to assist growers.

When the harvest season draws to a close, growers will be asked for their help in this region wide effort. Growers in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont will be contacted in early October to provide information on over twenty fresh market vegetable crops, fresh market berries, melons, and tree fruits. Production data will be collected as well as much needed information on retail and wholesale sales. Connecticut growers will be contacted for apple, peach, pear and sweet corn data only.

USDA's Fruit & Vegetable Survey is the only chance to officially measure tree fruit, vegetable and berry production in New England. Approximately 4,000 fruit and vegetable growers in New England will be asked for their help on this important project. A reference copy of the survey form will be mailed to producers in late September, and growers will be contacted by phone for the information through November. As with all our survey work, individual operator information is kept **strictly confidential** and is exempt from requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The individual reports are only used in combination with other reports to establish state and national estimates.

Price and yield data for most vegetable and berry crops grown in the New England states (excluding Connecticut) will be available in the January issue of **Ag Review**. Fresh market sweet corn acreage, production and value for all producing states will be available in the **Vegetable Annual Summary Report** from Washington, D.C. in late January 2003. Apple, peach and pear acreage, production and value for all producing States will be available in the **Non-Citrus Fruit & Nut Report** from Washington, D.C., also in late January 2003. All reports are available on the Internet within minutes of the scheduled release time and the statistics are reprinted in the January issue of the **Ag Review**. The monthly **Ag Review** is available on the Internet and complimentary copies will be mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six states in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov. All national statistics and state level newsletters are available free from e-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

For More Information Contact: Angie Considine or Emily McAllister at 1-800-642-9571